



Coming To Your Community Soon: Neighborhood Traffic Calming Meetings

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, October 08, 2007

City Hall Diary

A few months ago I wrote about the chronic problem of speeding in San Jose. My concern about this problem peaked when two parents were killed recently by a speeding driver while walking on Graystone Lane in Almaden Valley. At that time, I proposed that the City of San Jose review its traffic calming policy in an effort to update it so that it reflects the needs of residents today. For example, the current policy refers to using NASCOP (a photo radar device) that would take pictures of drivers in their cars as they sped by. Recently, NASCOP was ruled illegal by state courts, leaving a hole in our current policy.

Although I am concerned about speeding that occurs on expressways and freeways, my main concern is speeding on our neighborhood streets. Eighty percent of our streets in San Jose have a speed limit of 25 mile per hour. These 25 mph streets are where people live, kids play, and seniors walk. Speeding is a serious issue that does not discriminate against any neighborhood. Streets in Almaden, Willow Glen, Berryessa, Alum Rock, Northside and others echo the same sentiments: Stop speeding cars on our neighborhood streets.

Speeders affect our quality of life in San Jose and limit our outdoor activities—for example, not being able to allow our children to play in the front yard. In addition, another limitation speeding causes is that many people will not walk in their neighborhood for fear of crossing the street—and I am not referring to Almaden or Capitol Expressways, but 25 mph neighborhood streets which drivers continue to speed on, even where there are crosswalks.

In an effort to address the neighborhood speeding problem, the San Jose City Council unanimously supported Mayor Reed's memo to update our traffic calming policy (on September 18) which would allow the City of San Jose to have a series of traffic calming meetings throughout the city—one meeting in each district. I am proud that the mayor recommended that I chair the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Hearings because this issue is important to me.

The meetings will begin on October 18 and run through November 29 (see link below). Jim Helmer, Director of Transportation (DOT); Laura Wells, DOT Division Manager; and Captain Diane Urban and Lieutenant Jeff Smith from the San Jose Police Department are members of the traffic calming meetings. Our group is required to attend the meetings and then from the input received, write a report that will be presented to the city council in December.

The purpose of the meetings is to gather input from all residents in San Jose on what they would like to see us do. Residents can share any ideas, suggestion and concerns. From what has been shared with me thus far it seems that many residents would like to see more enforcement, the appeals process for traffic calming expanded and funding allocated to traffic calming efforts.

In 2001 our city had \$5 million budgeted for traffic calming; this last year we had zero. Our budget should echo the priorities of our residents and I believe after the traffic calming meetings are completed, money to slow cars down on the neighborhood streets will be validated as a priority.

The City of San Jose has not stopped collecting taxes; therefore, we need to prioritize the funds we do have on items and issues that are important to residents. Erik Larsen, President of AFSCME, MEF Local 101, shared with me at a meeting recently that he is looking forward to the traffic calming meetings because they represent a democratic process which encompasses the needs of San Jose residents directly. I agree.

The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Meeting Schedule.

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